



U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement

May 9, 2005

# News Release

## **EIGHT CHARGED WITH DISTRIBUTING MARIJUANA**

### ***Distribution Network Extended to at Least Four States***

NEW YORK-- Martin D. Ficke, New York Special Agent-in-Charge of the Department of Homeland Security's U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and Roslynn R. Mauskopf, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York today announced the unsealing of complaints charging DENNIS VASSEL, RAYMOND PANTON, CALVIN STEVENSON, CHRISTINE GODETTE, PIERRE JOHNSON, ARDEAN BUGGS, and two co-defendants with distributing large quantities of marijuana in Brooklyn, Queens, and Long Island.

The defendants are alleged to be part of a large-scale marijuana trafficking organization operating in several states, including New York, South Carolina, Florida, Arizona, and Georgia.

The charges announced today are part of Operation Jasper, a multi-agency effort to dismantle a Jamaican criminal organization operating throughout the United States. The investigation has been coordinated by ICE, with the assistance of the United States Attorney's Offices in the Eastern and Southern Districts of New York, the Drug Enforcement Administration, and various state and federal law enforcement agencies in South Carolina, Florida, and Arizona. To date, the operation has resulted in the arrest of 23 defendants, and the filing of criminal charges against approximately 20 additional defendants, including the eight defendants charged in the Eastern District of New York today.

The defendants arrested in New York today are scheduled to have their initial appearances this afternoon before United States Magistrate Judge Marilyn D. Go, at the U. S. Courthouse, 225 Cadman Plaza East, Brooklyn, New York.

According to the complaints, the defendants participated in the distribution of over 100 pounds of marijuana throughout the New York City metropolitan area and other areas of the United States between November 2004 and April 2005. They allegedly obtained the marijuana from a supplier in Arizona, who shipped the drugs to New York via Federal Express, United Parcel Service, and the United States Postal Service. The marijuana distributed by the defendants was of unusually high purity, and it sold for as much as \$2,200 a pound. The complaint states that the defendants paid for the marijuana by sending money orders or tightly-wrapped bundles of cash to their supplier in Arizona. Three of the packages seized by law enforcement contained a total of more than \$50,000 in cash.

The complaints charge that defendants VASSEL and PANTON were leaders of the New York-based arm of the organization, and arranged for the distribution of large shipments of high-quality marijuana with assistance from a co-conspirator in Florida; STEVENSON, GODETTE, JOHNSON, and two co-defendants helped to arrange and carry out these marijuana shipments by, among other things, lining up customers and accepting packages of

marijuana that had been mailed through private shippers or the United States Postal Service; and BUGGS assisted in the distribution of marijuana in South Carolina.

"ICE will not relent in the battle against those who traffic in drugs and threaten our public safety," said ICE Special Agent-in-Charge FICKE. "Groups that traffic narcotics have no place in New York, and we are seeking them out, arresting their leaders, and dismantling entire organizations."

"Drug interdiction is a priority of this Office," stated United States Attorney MAUSKOPF. "This crew of marijuana traffickers flooded our streets with its extremely potent brand of marijuana. Now, it is time for the defendants to be held accountable for their crimes." Ms. MAUSKOPF emphasized that the investigation is continuing.

Each defendant has been charged with conspiring to distribute and possess with intent to distribute marijuana, and if convicted, faces a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison, a minimum of three years of supervised release, and a \$1,000,000 fine.

The government's case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Bryan J. Rose.

The Defendants:

Name: DENNIS VASSEL (also known as "Shine")

Residence: 2314 Grand Avenue, Bronx, New York

Name: MARTIN TURNER (also known as RAYMOND PANTON and "Blitz")

DOB: 5/22/70

Residence: 36 Ives Court, Far Rockaway, New York

Name: CALVIN STEVENSON (also known as "Chuck")

DOB: 11/13/67

Residence: 544 Beach 64th Street, Far Rockaway, New York

Name: CHRISTINE GODETTE (also known as "Christine Callahan")

DOB: 12/25/64

Residence: 2202 Loretta Road, Far Rockaway, New York

Name: PIERRE JOHNSON (also known as "Billy")

DOB: 1/8/76

Residence: 50 Westminster Road, Brooklyn, New York

Name: ANNIE "LNU" (also known as "Karen Carter" and "Tiffani Davis")

DOB: 1962

Residence: 9234 214th Place, Queens Village, New York

Name: DELROY LAWRENCE (also known as "Dodge")

DOB: 9/17/68

Residence: 562 East 85th Street, Brooklyn, New York

Name: ARDEAN BUGGS (also known as "Artie" and "Hardy")

DOB: 1/6/78

Residence: 7748 Warsaw Road, Apt. #105, North Charleston, South Carolina

# ICE #

*U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.*